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**THE TALE OF
"THE ANZACS WHO TOOK MUSTAFA KEMAL PRISONER"
IN THE AUSTRALIAN PRESS
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During World War I the *Australian and New Zealand Army Troops* (ANZAC) fought alongside the English against the Ottoman Empire. These states that were defeated in 1915 in Gallipoli in Çanakkale were victorious on the Syria-Palestine front in 1918. The Ottoman Empire accepted defeat and surrendered by signing the *Armistice of Mudros* on 30 October 1918. Along with England, France and Italy, Australia and New Zealand signed the *Treaty of Sèvres* on 10 August 1920. After the thought that the Turks were lost in history with the signing of the *Treaty of Sèvres*, it would come as a shock to the whole world, including Australia that they were able to stop the Greek army at Inonu, Eskisehir in 1921. Media around the world was writing about how the Turks under General Mustafa Kemal's leadership were able to stand back up on their feet when shortly beforehand their guns were taken from them, their army discharged and with the general thought that they would be erased from history.

Australian General **Harry Chauvel**, came across troops that Mustafa Kemal was commanding twice: first in 1915 in Gallipoli during the Çanakkale War, then again in 1918 at the Syrian front.



Australian Army General Harry Chauvel.



General Harry Chauvel (middle) with staff officer Walter P. Farr (right) during the 1915 Çanakkale War in Gallipoli.

Eyes turned to Chauvel, recognized as "*the commander who beat the Turks at the Syrian front*" Chauvel would explain the Turks' come back like this at his speech he gave at the *United Service Club* on 28 February 1921:

Brisbane Courier, Tuesday 1 March 1921, "Near East".- "The position in the Near East was lucidly explained by Lieut.-General Sir H. G. Chauvel (Inspector-General of the Australian Military Forces) in an instructive lecture delivered in the *United Service Club* last evening. (...) Many diverting little stories, now to Queenslanders, were told by the lecturer. One of these related to Mustapha Kemal, the Turkish general, who, at the signing of the Armistice, took up a very truculent attitude towards the British. It was decided not to march against him, but to report his behaviour to Constantinople, and to give him every assistance to return to that city. He alighted, however, before reaching his destination, and had since raised an army and given the Greeks "a father of a hiding."

This is how the *First Inonu Victory* was heard throughout Australia. Mustafa Kemal began kicking the Greeks out with **The Great Offensive** that began on 26 August 1922. This news echoed all over the world, all the way to Australia.

H.S. Gullett,¹ an Australian war reporter, explained in his article published on 7 September 1922 how the defeated Turks from 1918 were brought back onto their feet by M. Kemal like this:

The Journal (Adelaide), Thursday 7 September 1922, p.1.

KEMAL PASHA. THE MAN AND HIS ARMY.

Mr. H. S. Gullett writes in the course of an article in the Melbourne Herald: -"Did you notice that old Jacko has knocked the Greeks?" said a Palestine Light Horseman to me in the tram. He was all smiles about it, and his satisfaction will be shared by most Australians who campaigned against the Turks on Gallipoli or between the Suez Canal and Aleppo. For to all who knew him in the war, the Turk, with all his faults, remains in our minds as the gentleman of the Near East. We know his sinister side; but still we think of him with respect, and even affection. That sooner or later he would beat the flabby Greek was certain. For the Turk is a great fighter, in some respects without equal and we felt, too, that he had already paid in full for his foolish venture into the war. He was bludgeoned into the conflict by Germany, he waged a wonderful losing fight, and finally suffered an overthrow of the most complete and terrible kind. His armies were utterly destroyed, and he almost ceased to exist at a nation.



Australian war reporter H. S. Gullett.
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Then, in his hour of extreme prostration and bitterness, the Greeks endeavoured to over-run and exploit his remaining territory in Asia Minor. Under the Peace Treaty Greece was given the conditional administration of the Smyrna province of Western Asia Minor. But she was not content with that. Never a match for Turkey in the days of the Ottoman's strength, the Greeks, prompted by the notorious and designing Constantine, launched a campaign which aimed at nothing short of the complete conquest of

Asia Minor and the end of the Turks as a sovereign people. For a time all went well. Constantine who since the Balkan war has had an inflated reputation as a soldier, went out in person to command his troops and participate in the triumph. But the Turk; although often beaten, is never vanquished. And in the moment of his crowning peril he found a leader of remarkable skill, courage, and personality. Kemal Pasha has saved the remnants of his race from annihilation and given them an opportunity of building up a nation again in Asia Minor.

The Australians know Kemal well. He was one of the ablest of the Turk leaders on Gallipoli.

Then he disappeared, and was not engaged on the Palestine front. But in the last days of the campaign General Chauvel came across him again up near Aleppo, and for some time actually held him as his prisoner.

The Debonair Kemal.

A couple of days after the armistice Chauvel learned that Kemal Pasha, with a corps of Turkish infantry, was encamped 40 miles from Aleppo towards Baghdad. A staff officer was sent down in a motor-car to demand his surrender. Kemal laughed. "Tell Chauvel," he said, in excellent French. "to come and take me." The condition of Macandrew's² (Major General H.J.M. Macandrew-C.Ö.) men and horses made this impossible, and Kemal knew it. After a few days' parley, however, Kemal recognised the hopelessness, of his position, and he drove into Aleppo and surrendered to Macandrew. But he obtained good terms, which included the agreement that his troops, after being disarmed, were to be transported to Constantinople. Kemal, who was treated with much courtesy, remained for some time as Macandrew's prisoner. He proved to be a highly educated, debonair man of the world, and displayed a very independent spirit and supreme confidence in himself and in the resuscitation of the Ottoman Empire. And even then, with his country in ruins, he was busy on plans for the future. Soon orders came that he was to be allowed to proceed by train to Constantinople, which was then in the possession of the British. He went off smiling in a luxuriose State car, remarking pleasantly to Macandrew, "You don't really expect me to reach Constantinople, do you?" He had no intention of going to Constantinople to become again a British prisoner. At one of the Asia Minor towns he left the train and established the headquarters of what in time became the force which is now driving the Greeks out of the country. His method of acquiring an army was simplicity it self. In the course of a few weeks troop trains came along bearing the men of his old command and thousands of others from Mesopotamia. Kemal had all the trains halted and the men paraded. He offered them service, and at the same time drew ominous pictures of what was ahead of them at Constantinople. Very soon he had a numerous command of veterans. How he fed and armed them we do not know. The French are said to have helped as compensation for a free hand in Syria. Possibly; too, the Germans took a hand, on general principles. But at best the Turkish soldiery engaged against the Greeks must be ill-fed, unshod, and in rags and tatters. Given a rifle and a full bandelier,³ however, and a supply of grain and water, the Turk will fight day in and out the whole year round.

MacAndrew, whose name was mentioned in this article published in 1922, had died three years earlier in 1919. Australian General Chauvel, on the other hand, would reiterate the main points of the article in a speech he gave on 29 September 1922 at the *Royal Colonial Institute*.



Henry John Milnes MacAndrew
National Portrait Gallery, London.

According to Chauvel, after being ordered to return to Istanbul and surrender following the signing of the *Armistice of Mudros* on 30 October 1918, Mustafa Kemal boarded the train but never went to Istanbul. In 1918, near the halfway point to Istanbul, Kemal exited the train in Konya and began organizing the resistance against the Greek army that would force them out of the country in 1922:

The Sydney Morning Herald (NSW)-18 September 1922, p.9:

KEMAL PASHA. INCIDENT IN THE WAR, ORIGIN OF PRESENT TROUBLE.- "I look upon the matter as serious," said Lieut.-General Sir Harry Chauvel, Inspector General of the Australian Military Forces.

"The Turk has his tail up, and anything might happen. One can only hope that the matter can be settled diplomatically. The General offered an interesting personal reminiscence affecting the origin of the present situation. I had much to do

with Kemal Pasha after the armistice," he said, "and I have always looked upon him as a very able soldier. I know that the Turk, properly led, is a very tough proposition. When the armistice occurred Kemal was in command of the Sixth Turkish Army, which was then about 70 miles north-east of Aleppo, and it devolved upon me to see that Kemal observed the terms of the armistice. This he refused to do, and, owing to representations made to the Turkish Government at Constantinople, Kemal was relieved of his command, and ordered to report at Constantinople. He did not go to that city," continued General Chauvel, "but literally sat on the platform at Konia, and as his Sixth Army was demobilised by the Desert Mounted Corps and sent through unarmed by train to Constantinople he collected them as they passed, and that formed the nucleus of the force which has recently defeated the Greek army. From these small beginnings this great trouble has arisen."

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The Argus (Melbourne), Monday 18 September 1922, p.7: "Anything Might Happen." Sir Harry Chauvel's View. SYDNEY, Sunday - Lieutenant General Sir Harry Chauvel (Inspector General of the Australian Military Forces) said - "I look upon the matter as serious The Turk has his tail up, and anything might happen. One can only hope that the matter can be settled diplomatically. I had much to do with Kemal Pasha after the armistice. I have always looked upon him as a very able soldier. I know that the Turk, I properly led is a very tough proposition." [Compare with SHM 18.09.1922]

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The Sydney Morning Herald (NSW), Saturday 30 September 1922, page 14: Palestine and Syria: - Under the auspices of the *Royal Colonial Institute*, Sir Harry Chauvel, G.C.M.G., K.C.B., delivered a lecture last night in the institute's rooms, Bligh-street. Sir Walter Davidson, Lady Davidson, and Lady Jellicoe were present. Mr. Hugh Denison, president, occupied the chair. The subject of the lecture was "*Impressions of the Peoples of Palestine, Syria, and Mesopotamia*." By the aid of maps the speaker traced the different national spheres of influence in the Near East, and indicated the great difficulties of administration which arose out of the formidable obstacles to peace which these racial differentiations created. He said that Mustapha Kemal (sic) Pasha was one of the few generals who brought a reputation out of the late war, and explained how the latter who, after the armistice, was in the Australian camp for several days, stayed on the road to Constantinople where had had been ordered to proceed, and by securing the Turkish deserters as they passed down formed the nucleus of the army with which he was now threatening more trouble in the East. The lecture was illustrated by means of sets of pictures of an extremely interesting character. In moving a vote of thanks to the lecturer, Sir Walter Davidson said the difficulties of stabilising Palestine, Mesopotamia, and Syria were due to racial and lingual obstacles. In his view a great mistake had been made in removing General Allenby from a sphere in which his peculiar qualities were invaluable. The motion was seconded by Mr. G. F. Earp, M.L.C., and carried with applause.

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The Armidale Chronicle (NSW), Wednesday 4 October 1922, page 7: Productions of War. Mustapha Kemal's Rise. How He Build Up The Army. - "Mustapha Kemal is one of the few great leaders that the war has produced. Towards the end of the war he was sent to Syria to oppose us, but we got to Aleppo first. After the armistice he was ordered by the Turkish Government to return to Constantinople, and we forwarded him on. But he never went there, he left the train at Ikonja. As we sent the disarmed Turks of his army forward to Constantinople in batches of 100, he collected them there. When we learned this, we arranged that the train should not stop at Ikonja, but the Turks deserted at every chance. Mustapha did not get them all, but he got about 10,000. That was the nucleus of the army with which he has beaten the Greeks."

This description of how Mustapha Kemal got his army, formed part of an illustrated lecture on "*Impressions of the Peoples of Palestine, Syria, and Mesopotamia*," which General Sir Henry

Chauvel, Inspector-General of Australian Forces, gave at the headquarters of the Royal Colonial Institute N.S.W. branch, Sydney. (...)

Morning Bulletin (Rockhampton), Friday 6 October 1922, p.8: Kemal the Soldier. - *"Kemal Pasha, in my opinion, was one of the very few great military leaders produced by the war. As a soldier, he commands my respect,"* said General Sir Harry Chauvel, in a lecture to members of the Royal Colonial Institute last night says the Sydney "Daily Telegraph" of Monday last. *"When the armistice was signed I sent one of my staff officers to his headquarters to arrange with him the fulfilment of the agreed terms. Mustapha refused to have anything to do with my officer and declared that he knew nothing of any armistice. I reported this to my headquarters, and representations were made at Constantinople. Mustapha was ordered to hand over to his second in command and return to Constantinople. He only went half-way, however, and then intercepted the consignments of surrendered men and arms we were sending through from battlefield to Constantinople, and that formed the nucleus of his present army."* *"Impressions of the people of Palestine, Syria, and Mesopotamia"* was the subject of the general's lecture. Sir Walter Davidson moved a vote of thanks to the speaker.

The Richmond River Express and Casino Kyogle Advertiser (NSW), Friday 6 October 1922, Great Military Leader.- *"Kemal Pasha, in my opinion, was one of the very few great military leaders produced by the war. As a soldier, he commands my respect,"* said General Sir Harry Chauvel, in a lecture to members of the Royal Colonial Institute. *"When the armistice was signed,"* said Sir Harry, *"I sent one of my staff officers to his headquarters to arrange with him the fulfilment of the agreed terms. Mustapha refused to have anything to do with my officer, and declared that he knew nothing of any armistice. I reported this to my headquarters, and representations were made in Constantinople. Mustapha was ordered to hand over to his second in command and return to Constantinople. He only went half-way, however, and then intercepted the consignments of surrendered men and arms we were sending through from the battlefield to Constantinople, and that formed the nucleus of his present army."*



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

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Australian General H. Chauvel, in 1918 at the Syrian front.

Similar news were published in the Australian press 15 years later:

The Cairns Post, Wednesday, 23 June 1937, p.8. Father of The Turks. Kemal Ataturk. The Australians knew Kemal well. They knew him on Gallipoli and encountered him again in the closing days of the Palestine campaign. **A few days after the Armistice Sir Harry Chauvel learned that Kemal Pasha with a corps of Turkish infantry, was encamped 40 miles from Aleppo. A staff officer was sent down in a motor car to demand his surrender. Kemal laughed. "Tell Chauvel," he said in excellent French, "to come and take me."**

The Western Star, Wednesday, 7 July 1937, Liberator of Turkey, The Rise of Kemal Ataturk. - Kemal Ataturk, once Great Britain's enemy, now her friend, is one of the world's most remarkable men. **General Sir Harry Chauvel has called him one of the few great leaders that the war produced."**

The Shepparton Advertiser. Sunday, 28 March 1938, p.9: Armageddon. - "A few days after the Armistice, **Sir Harry Chauvel learned that Kemal Pasha, with a corps of Turkish infantry was encamped 40 miles from Aleppo. A staff officer was sent down in a motor car to demand his surrender. Kemal laughed, "Tell Chauvel," he said in excellent French, "to come and take me."**

On 12 November 1938 (two days after Mustafa Kemal's death), Australian newspaper *The Age* would repeat this false news that was originally published in 1922, in an article titled "**Kemal's Surrender**". This article also said that one of **General Chauvel's** staff officer **Walter P. Farr**, caught Mustafa Kemal on the train headed to Istanbul after the truce and took his sword:



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Walter P. Farr in 1918 at the Syrian front.

The Staff Corps ("Wally" Farr to everybody from the G.O.C. to his batman), by hard riding at the head of a squadron of troopers, intercepted Kemal's train at a siding. The Turk, who spoke good French and a little English, was truculent at first, and refused to hand over his sword to any but a

The Age, 12 November 1938, p.30: Kamal's Surrender.- "By the ironies of fate, Kamal Ataturk, who deliberately chose the emblem of the grey wolf, which occasionally ravages the steppes of Asia Minor, and who manifested many of its characteristics, died peacefully in his bed practically on the twentieth anniversary of the armistice. It was almost 20 years to the day since a Melbourne officer accepted Kamal's sword as a token of surrender at Aintab, a village about 40 miles on the Euphrates side of Aleppo. His resource and prowess as a soldier were well known to the Anzacs since the Gallipoli days. Although the Turkish armistice had been signed, and Kamal's army of the Euphrates captured or scattered, Kamal himself, with his staff, was reported to be heading in a special train to the railway junction at Aleppo, but the advance section of Chauvel's Australian cavalry got there first. Colonel Farr, of

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lieutenant-general. Some of the men suggested so the colonel to give him a "belt under the ear," but Farr was equally Oriental and suave. He explained that he personally represented General Chauvel, on whose behalf he would accept an honorable surrender. The train was luxuriously appointed, but the troopers searched it in vain for the bullion it was reported to contain. Kamal, however, had four beautiful Arab ponies which he had looted. He was not taken into captivity. After a few days he managed to obtain a large sum in gold from the Turkish Ministry of the Interior, upon the payment of which he was allowed by the British authority to take his train on to Anatolia. That release probably changed the course of history in the Near East.